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Campisi subpoenaed in JFK probe

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and DON FISHER

Joseph Campisi, owner of a popular restaurant here, is the first Dallas resident known to have been subpoenaed by the House Assassinations Committee.

Campisi, owner of the Egyptian restaurant at 5610 E. Mockingbird Lane, has been ordered to appear before the committeee in Washington, D.C., for a closed door session March 16. He was not told why his testimony is wanted and was not asked to bring any documents or other materials.

Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby told the FBI in 1963 that he ate dinner at Campisi's restaurant the night before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy Nov. 22, 1963. Two days later Ruby shot accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

Campisi, whose associates say he knew Ruby, was not called by the Warren Commission to testify about Ruby's visit to his restaurant.

Campisi, contacted by The News, at first denied he had been subpoenaed by two committee investigators Tuesday. Later, he said he would have no comment.

A patron who was in the restaurant when Campisi was subpoenaed said the restaurateur commented to the investigators, "I only go first class."

Dallas attorney Lamar Holley acknowledged Wednesday he had been "retained in the case."

A spokesman for the House Assassinations Committee said that under its rules, "no comment is permitted concerning any subpoena or any witness or any potential witness."

Ruby told the FBI in 1963 that he left the Carousel Club in downtown Dallas the night of Nov. 21, 1963, with longtime friend Ralph Paul of Arlington to go to the Egyptian for dinner. Paul, at the time, was part owner of the Carousel.

While eating at the Egyptian, a "salesman" for The Dallas Morning News whom the FBI identified only as "Connors," came over to the table and invited Ruby to the nearby Castaway Club. Ruby said he declined because the manager of the Castaway, Tony Caterine, had hired an orchestra away from Ruby a short time earlier.

Ruby told the FBI he met "Connors" again in The Dallas Morning News advertising offices the next day, shortly before the assassination. Personnel records at The News, however, show no such employee in 1963 and advertising representatives who talked with Ruby in the offices said they have no recollection of an individual named Connors.

The investigators who subpoenaed Campisi have been part of a team probing the Ruby aspects of the assassination. They have been stationed in Dallas since September 1977.

The 12-member committee has been racked with internal problems, including the resignation a year ago of chairman Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez of San Antonio because neither the House nor other committee members would support his firing of the committee's chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague.

Sprague later resigned and was replaced by Robert Blakey, a Cornell University law professor. Since Blakey became chief counsel, the committee has imposed a news blackout over its investigations of both the assassinations of Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr.

Shortly before Blakey was hired, the committee subpoenaed Loran Eugene Hall of Los Angeles and Santos Trafficante, a reputed Florida underworld figure. Both refused to answer questions, citing constitutional privileges.

Hall apparently interested the committee because of his alleged knowledge of a Sept. 25, 1963, meeting in Dallas at the home of Mrs. Sylvia Odio, a Cuban exile. Mrs. Odio after the assassination said one of the two men accompanying Hall was Oswald, but the Warren Commission discounted this because Oswald was supposed to have been en route to Mexico City from New Orleans at the time.